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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JUNE 18, 2009

Summary: President Asif Zardari's remarks made during his meeting with European Commission's officials in Brussels that "Pakistan seeks trade, not aid" dominated headlines in all major newspapers on Thursday. Several newspapers also front-paged report that the "Peshawar Airport closed after terror threat." Reports and photographs of Ambassador Patterson's visit to IDPs camp in Swabi and her reiteration that "U.S committed to continuing its support for displaced families in Pakistan" received extensive coverage. Newspapers ran the Secretary of State Clinton's statement "applauding" the resumption of dialogue between Pakistan and India. The English language daily, "The News," and its sister Urdu newspaper, "Jang," reported that President Obama's National Security Advisor James Jones would visit Pakistan next week. A statement by Qari Zain, a rival commander of Baitullah Mehsud claiming that the "TTP Chief has links with India and Israel" also received prominent coverage.

Most major dailies ran analytical editorials on President Zardari's meeting with Indian Prime Minister Singh on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. The prestigious English daily, "Dawn," pointed out that "to revive the dialogue after an impasse can be quite a challenge and invariably requires the friendly intervention of friends - the U.S. on the present occasion." Likewise, the center-right national English daily "The Nation," noted that the "U.S. also played an important role in encouraging the initiation of the dialogue." The Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din," opined that the "meeting between the two leaders has created the hope of resumption of bilateral talks. However, our leaders must ensure that they do not put national priorities on the back burner when these talks actually take place."

End Summary.

News Stories

"We Want Trade Not Aid, President Zardari Tells EU" "The News"
(06/18)

"The European Union said on Wednesday it would strengthen relations with Pakistan and offered President Zardari counter-terrorism help in his bid to defeat Taliban and other Islamic militants at home. At a meeting that both sides called 'historic,' EU officials and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari agreed to shift their relationship from one that has long focused on trade to one that also embraces regular discussions about security, good governance and regional and global issues. A joint statement after the meeting

said the EU would step up relations with Pakistan in the fields of development, education, science, security, counter-terrorism, strengthening democracy, trade and other issues. President Zardari pushed for greater access to European markets, saying that trade rather than aid was his chief goal in a landmark summit with the EU.

'What I need is trade, not aid. I'm looking for MoUs (memorandums of understanding) and not IoUs and I intend to get them,' he added."

"Peshawar Airport Closed After Terror Threat" "Dawn" (06/18)

"The Peshawar International Airport was shut down on Wednesday after an intelligence report warned of a terrorist attack on aircraft by a militant group based in the tribal region, officials said. An official said the airport would remain closed till Thursday night."

"United States Provides Supplies For Displaced Children In Swabi District" "The Nation," "The News," "Jang," "Ausaf," "Islam," "Mashriq," "Nawa-i-Waqt," "Express," "Khabrain," and "Pakistan" (06/18)

"U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson visited the Anbar Elementary College Camp in Swabi District, where approximately 2,500 displaced persons are currently residing. During her visit, the Ambassador delivered school supplies for more than 500 displaced children receiving instruction at the school. In addition, the Ambassador provided 520 long-lasting flashlights that do not require batteries to displaced households residing at both the Anbar site and Worker Welfare Folks School, Shah Mansoor. 'We are committed to continuing our support for displaced families in Pakistan and are prepared to do more as the situation demands,' said Ambassador Patterson." "Hillary Praises Resumption Of Indo-Pak Dialogue" "Daily Times" "The News," "The Nation," (06/18)

"Applauding the resumption of dialogue between Pakistan and India, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Wednesday has voiced the hope that New Delhi would support Islamabad's anti-terrorism efforts. 'Of course, we believe that India and Pakistan actually face a number of common challenges, and we welcome a dialogue between them,' she said, addressing a meeting of the U.S.-India Business Council."

"Obama's Security Advisor Due Next Week" "The News," "Jang" (06/18) (06/18)

"Pakistan and the United States will be having highest-level dialogue on the security issues next week in Islamabad when the President Barack Hussain Obama's National Security Advisor (NSA) general James L. Jones would be visiting the region."

"Zardari Sought Time To Act: Singh" "The News" (06/18)

"Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Wednesday that President Asif Ali Zardari had sought more time to act against anti-Indian militants because Islamabad's fight with the Taliban had entered a crucial phase, Singh told reporters on his way back from Russia, where the two leaders met on Tuesday."

"Indo-Pak Talks Meaningless Without Kashmir Issue: Former Army Chief General Baig" "Ummat" (06/18)

"Pakistan's former Army Chief General (R) Aslam Baig has said that resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan would prove meaningless if the outstanding and core issue of Kashmir is not addressed. He claimed that upcoming two months would be disastrous for Americans in Afghanistan. He termed the U.S. presence as root-cause of terrorism in this part of the world. He brushed aside the notion that 'Afghan Taliban are fighting against Pakistan Army,' and avowed that 'they do not want to fight against Pakistan Army.'"

"Kill Baitullah Now Or Else, Warns Rival Commander" "The News" (06/18)

"Qari Zainuddin, a rival commander of Tehrik-e-Taliban Chief Baitullah Mehsud, on Wednesday accused the TTP Chief of having links with India and Israel. He acted against Islam as well as the country and if not eliminated now, militancy would surge and problems for

the government would grow. In an exclusive interview with Geo News, Zainuddin Mehsud said though Baitullah was wearing the cap of Mujahideen but all his actions were against Islam and the country, adding they would support military action against him."

"Baitullah Is U.S. Agent, Claims Former Close Aide" "The News" (06/18)

"Haji Turkistan Betani, a former close aide of Baitullah Mahsud, has claimed that assassination of Benazir Bhutto was plotted by Baitullah. Talking to Sana Bucha in Crisis Cell Program of Geo News, Haji Turkistan also revealed that Baitullah is an American agent and this is the reason he has not been targeted by the U.S. drones. Haji said that Baitullah is misguiding innocent youths on the instigation by Israel and India to destroy mosques and educational institutions and martyr religious scholars inside Pakistan."

"Major Militants' Headquarters Destroyed" "The News" (06/18)

"Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik while talking to a private TV channel on Wednesday said the government was candid in its efforts to root out terrorism from the country and the major headquarters of the militants had been destroyed."

"28 More Militants Killed In Dir, Swat" "The News" (06/18)

"As the armed villagers in Dir Upper district on Wednesday killed six holed up Taliban fighters in Doog Darra area, the Army claimed to have killed 22 more militants in the nearby Dir Lower and Swat districts during the ongoing 'Rah-e-Rast' operation. Locals said a cave in Kandao area of Ghazigay village, where the armed villagers have surrounded the Taliban, was heavily shelled from Panakot and Beranjo. Security forces have deployed artillery guns in these areas to pound the positions of the militants to soften targets for the Lashkar, which is using heavy weapons."

"Jets And Choppers Fly Sorties Over Waziristan" "Daily Times" (06/18)

"Army surveillance planes flew over suspected Taliban strongholds in Waziristan Agency, where a major operation is planned, and helicopter gunships hit several targets in advance strikes on Wednesday, officials said."

"Troops Kill 4 Militants In Bajaur" "The News" (06/18)

"Four militants were killed and several others injured as the security forces expanded the ongoing operation against Taliban to other areas in Charmang, Bajaur Agency on Wednesday."

"Five Terrorists Held" "Daily Times" (06/18)

"Police on Wednesday arrested three suspected terrorists, including two would-be suicide bombers, in Rawalpindi; a suspected Taliban from a mosque in Peshawar's Kissa Khawani Bazaar; and a notorious terrorist from the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi group in Karachi. Police also seized suicide jacket, a hand grenade, two pistols, 90 rounds and 2 kilograms of explosives."

"Taliban Vow To Continue War" "The Nation" (06/18)

"Swat-based Taliban have vowed to continue war against the government till 'practical implementation' of Nizam-e-Adl in Malakand Division, said Tehrik-e-Taliban spokesman Haji Muslim Khan while talking to BBC on Wednesday via telephone from an unknown location."

"Illegal Seminaries In Capital (Islamabad) Face Closure" "The News" (06/18)

"The government has decided to close down all seminaries working illegally in different parts of the federal capital. The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has issued notice to one such institution in a posh sector of the city, 'The News' learned on Monday. 'There are 260 Madaris (seminaries) in the Islamabad Capital Territory and around 15 of them are operating illegally,' an

official of the CDA told The News requesting anonymity."

"U.S. Lawmaker Urges Senate To Quickly Pass ROZs Bill" "Daily Times" (06/18)

"Congressman Chris Van Hollen, a supporter of the recently-passed Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZs) program in the U.S. House of Representatives, has called on the Senate to approve the bill urgently to help Pakistan secure its restive northwestern region."

"U.S. Denies Giving Combat Assistance To Pakistan" "Dawn" (06/18)

"Top U.S. Commander David Petraeus has denied that the U.S. is providing direct combat assistance to Pakistan in its fight against militants. 'We are not the source of it, this is a Pakistani operation,' he said on Wednesday, as he listed U.S. financial and material assistance. Some 100,000 rounds of ammunition and four MI-17 cargo helicopters had been delivered, while more than \$400 million in U.S. aid was sent to help the millions of refugees displaced by fighting in the Swat valley. Some \$447 million in direct U.S. military assistance has also been pledged to Islamabad. But, according to Gen. Petraeus, 'none of this is direct support in combat,' the General said at a meeting with French journalists at the U.S. Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Florida."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Handshake In Russia," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (06/18)

"It is a happy development that New Delhi and Islamabad have decided to reopen communications and discuss issues at the negotiating table.... Nevertheless they will be important as they will set the tone of the dialogue in the months to come. If they have a positive impact on the atmospherics of the talks these encounters would have been worth their while.... To revive the dialogue after an impasse can be quite a challenge and invariably requires the friendly intervention of friends - the U.S. on the present occasion.

"SCO Moot," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/18)

"President Zardari's 40-minutes talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh indicated the beginning of a slow thaw between the two countries.... U.S. also played an important role in encouraging the initiation of the dialogue. The talks have been termed important for they could revive the peace process, stalled for seven months."

"The Hope Of Indo-Pak Talks Resumption," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (06/18)

"The meeting between the two leaders has created the hope of resumption of bilateral talks. However, our leaders must ensure that they do not put national priorities on the back burner when these talks actually take place. Otherwise, when the two leaders meet again at Sharm El Sheikh, the meeting will carry a sense of our defeat. We hope that the government will not do this [i.e. Ignore national priorities]."

"Pakistan-Indian Dialogue - Parliament Should Decide Parameters," an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (06/18)

"The situation demands that the government should take the nation into confidence vis-`-vis our foreign policy on India.... What communication took place with New Delhi in the backdrop of Indian terrorists, arrested in Pakistan? What steps were taken to foil the conspiracy to render Pakistan barren by stealing its water? What response was given to the Indian tactics of undermining holding of cricket world cup in Pakistan and harming Pakistan's trade? All the steps should be taken in the light of agenda set by the Parliament, which it will provide after reviewing the foreign policy threadbare.

In the past some unjustified Indian demands were accepted in order to have good relations with India. Now is the time to act in keeping with our constitution and the laws instead of arresting

people on others behest."

"Zardari-Manmohan Meeting: What Did We Gain, What Did We Lose?," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (06/18)

"It appears that it was not a pleasant meeting, rather a session for Indian Prime Minister to reprimand President Asif Ali Zardari and repeating Americanized 'do more' mantra against terrorism. And this humiliation was arranged by our leaders.... This meeting was nothing, but an instrument to heap more terrorism blame on Pakistan and seek guarantees for good moral character.... The nation can rightly ask President Zardari as to what forced him to meet with the Prime Minister of the country that was bent upon perpetrating aggression."

"Indo-Pak Talks: The Thaw Begins," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (06/18)

"Undoubtedly, the meeting between Manmohan Singh and Asif Zardari can be termed a positive development towards the resumption of composite dialogue that has been suspended for the last eight months. We must believe that there will be further steps towards normalization of bilateral ties when the two leaders meet again at the Non Aligned Movement summit in Sharm El Sheikh."

"Zardari-Manmohan Meeting," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (06/18)

"Foreign Office is repeating archaic expressions to describe meeting between President Zardari and Prime Minister Singh as a success, however, there was nothing as such that could be termed as success in this sidelines meeting. India just reiterated its accusations against Pakistan, but Pakistani President Zardari remained silent, did not utter even a single word on what India is doing against Pakistan. Thanks to President that at least he raised the issue of Kashmir. America has been urging Pakistan for quite some time to resume talks with India, stop considering India as a threat, move troops from Eastern border as Pakistan has to now fight a war of existence in South Waziristan, but against whom? Our own people?"

"Time To Talk," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/18)

"The resumption of greater normalcy between Islamabad and New Delhi is welcome. But while dialogue and negotiations between the two nations are to be encouraged, and have in the past led to steps - such as the cross-border bus services - that help people meet and encourage contact between them, it is time now to fix a firmer goal. Both nations have suffered immense losses due to terrorism."

"The Message From Yekaterinburg," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (06/18)

"The war against terrorism should not be an India-Pakistan war. So far it is, with Pakistan blaming India for mischief in Balochistan and its 'Consulates' in Afghanistan; and India blaming Pakistan for sheltering terrorists who attacked it last year and will continue to attack it unless punished. If some media analysis is to be believed, the operation against Baitullah Mehsud is also a kind of India-Pakistan war. A new kind of dialogue between the two countries is essential. And it can't be a rehash of what happened in the past, in which some optimists saw 'great progress' but which yielded no results."

"Zardari Should Have Discussed State Terrorism In (Indian Held Kashmir (IHK),," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (06/18)

"We believe that there is no point in resuming the dialogue until and unless India changes its hubristic attitude and shows commitment and sincerity to engage into meaningful dialogue leading to resolution of the core issues. The very fact that Dr. Manmohan Singh made uncouth remarks at the time of handshake with President Asif Ali Zardari shows that Indians have very little interest in normalization of relations and want to continue building pressure on the country on the so-called issue of terrorism. The way he talked

also gave an impression as if there is nothing else in Pakistan-India context except terrorism."

"Passage Of Pakistan Aid Bill In The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (06/18)

"American Senate's Foreign Relations Committee has approved the bill for the provision of aid to Pakistan.... Pakistan's Ambassador to the U.S., honorable Husain Haqqani's efforts played a great role in having the new draft of the legislation approved and curtailing the conditions that were made part of the bill in the House of Representatives.... We appreciate the efforts the Pakistani Ambassador is making in our national interest and congratulate him for the same."

"Operation Rah-i-Nijat, After Operation Rah-i-Raast," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (06/18)

"Admiral Mullen's secret trip to Pakistan soon after the Swat operation began led many observers to say that he came with the message that the U.S. was not interested in an operation in Swat, but an operation in the tribal areas, especially South Waziristan, as it believes these areas to be the real base of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Following this visit, the Pakistani government and the army signaled that they would soon end the Swat operation and start it in Waziristan.... Now the army and 'militants' are being made to fight each other so that Pakistan can be destabilized internally. Things have come to such a pass that Pakistan is also being taught that its real enemy is not India but those religious forces in the country that are resisting or opposing U.S. interests in the region. Pakistan is being compelled to withdraw troops from its borders [with India] and shift them to the tribal areas... It is important for our political and military leaders to stop and ask: are we becoming tools in the hands of our enemy-like friends for temporary interests."

"Rah-i-Nijat," an op-ed by Hameed Akhtar in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (06/18)

"An operation against Baitullah Mehsud and his accomplices can prove decisive in stopping terrorism and suicide attacks. But for this to happen, the Pakistan Army needs the full support of the Pakistani nation. Those who are still insisting that the operation be stopped and dialogue with terrorists be held must also look at Baitullah Mehsud's numerous 'feats.' I feel it is incumbent upon all Pakistanis to participate in bringing to justice perpetrators [of crimes] like the killing of Benazir Bhutto and that of a moderate religious scholar like Maulana Sarfaraz Naeemi."

"Mohmand - Where Proactive Military Measures Worked," an op-ed by Nasim Zahra in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/18)

"The strategy focused on going after the Taliban commanders proactively and essentially taking the war to their strongholds. That is what seems to have paid off. It has put the Taliban commanders on the defensive, restricted their movement and provided confidence to the local population. Their camps have been dismantled, and instead of just clearing the roads the Mohmand Scouts have gone into their inner sanctuaries.... Another abiding challenge area in Mohmand agency is the Suran valley area. Above it, on the Pakistani Goraprai and Shoncrai posts, there is no U.S. or Afghan presence on the other side of the border. In around mid-May, after repeated complaints by Pakistanis, about 60 American troops did base themselves opposite Pakistani posts. On the sixth day the Taliban attacked them, leaving dead three soldiers and then the US forces withdrew. Hence, the area is again unmanned and Afghan and non-Afghan movement left unchecked."

"Obama's Mideast Agenda," an op-ed by Tariq Fatemi in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (06/18)

"Admittedly, the speed and resolve with which Obama has decided to step into the quicksand of the Middle East imbroglio has caught the Israelis off guard. But Netanyahu is a highly intelligent and skilled politician, who will monitor the American domestic scene for

any chinks in its armor.... Obama has his task cut out for him. Netanyahu will test his resolve and determination on all fronts, domestically and externally, with a mix of rigidity and ingenuity. The extreme religious right in the U.S. already is deeply suspicious of Obama. This will be encouraged by the strong pro-Israeli lobbies. Obama can take on this challenge only if he can assure his electorate that what he plans to achieve will not only ensure Israel's security, but also promote U.S. interests in the Middle East."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson